

IS THIS NORMAL?

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

3rd Annual Maryland MIECHV Conference
September 18, 2018

STACEY BROWN, M.ED, LCPC
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS & RESEARCH





The Enough Abuse Campaign

Before we begin



Part I:
Education on normal sexual behaviors of children and teens

Part II:
Communication for preventing child sexual abuse

Part III: Advocate and Report



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Presentation outline



**NAME THAT BODY
PART**



Understanding child sexual abuse



Educate ourselves about how to distinguish ***developmentally expected*** sexual behaviors in children from those that might be ***problematic***.

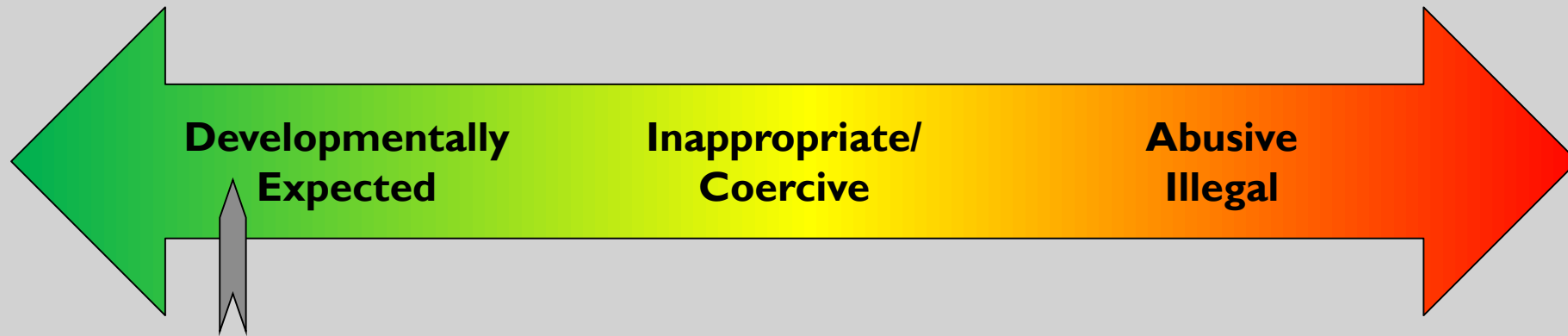


The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*

about child sexual abuse

Continuum of sexual behaviors of children



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: Educate

child sexual abuse

Developmentally expected behaviors



Infancy (ages 0 – 2):

- Explore whole body, including genitals
- Touch genitals for pleasure (masturbation)
- Physical response to stimulation
- Enjoy being naked

Developmentally expected behaviors

Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Developmentally expected behaviors



Early childhood (ages 3 – 5):

- Touch genitals for pleasure
- Play games like doctor to explore physical differences between boys and girls
- Ask questions about where babies come from and how they are born

Developmentally expected behaviors

Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Developmentally expected behaviors



Middle childhood (ages 6-8):

- Engage in sexual exploration with peers
- Begin looking to peers and media for information about sex and gender expectations
- Develop more complex understanding of sex and sexuality
- Masturbate
- Socialize mainly with own gender and maintain rigid expectations for behavior based on gender

Developmentally expected behaviors

Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Developmentally expected behaviors



Late childhood (ages 9-12):

- Preoccupation with sexuality
- Develop crushes and may begin dating
- Have concerns about being 'normal'
- Masturbate
- Reluctant and/or embarrassed to ask questions of caregivers
- Value privacy

Developmentally expected behaviors

Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Developmentally expected behaviors



Adolescence (ages 13-17):

- Express their sexuality
- Masturbate
- Have the capacity to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Understand that media messages influence views about sex
- Understand consequences of sexual activity (pregnancy, STDs, etc.)

Adapted from "Growth and Development, Ages 13 to 17 – What Parents Need to Know" www.advocatesforyouth.org

Developmentally expected behaviors

Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Inappropriate/ Coercive Behaviors



- Preoccupation with sexual themes especially sexually aggressive
- Pulling other's skirt up or pants down
- Sexually explicit or precocious conversation with peers
- Sexual teasing/embarrassment of others
- Sexual graffiti (especially chronic or impacting individuals)



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*

about child sexual abuse

Inappropriate/ Coercive Behaviors



- Single occurrences of peeping, exposing, obscenities, pornographic interest, frottage
- Preoccupation with masturbation
- Mutual masturbation/group masturbation
- Simulating foreplay with dolls or peers with clothing on, i.e. petting, French kissing



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*

about child sexual abuse

Inappropriate/ Coercive Behaviors



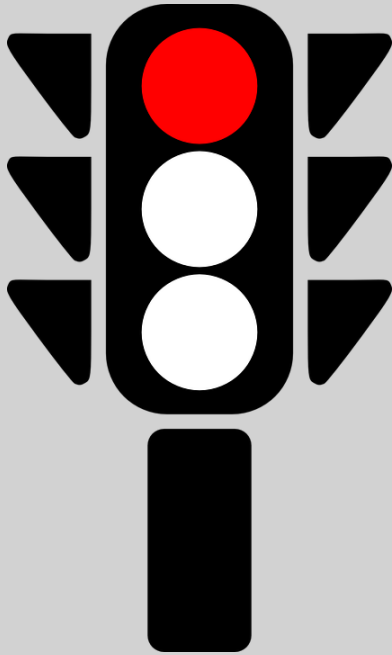
- Preoccupation/anxiety with sexuality
- Pornographic interest
- Promiscuity
- Sexually aggressive themes/obscenities
- Graffiti – chronic/targeting individuals
- Embarrassing others
- Peeping, exposing, frottage with peers



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*
about child sexual abuse

Abusive/ Illegal Behaviors



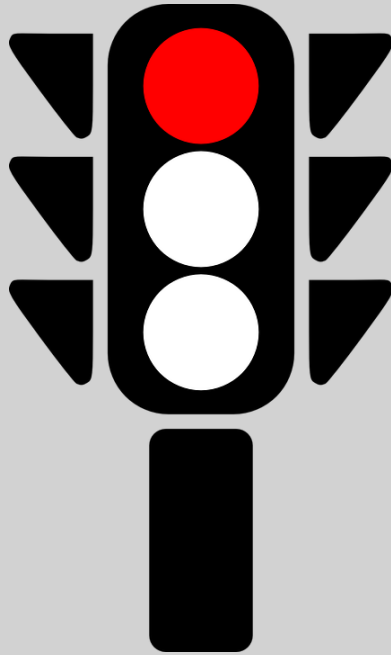
- Sexual explicit conversations with significant age difference
- Touching genitals of others
- Degrading self or other with sexual themes
- Forcing exposure of other's genitals
- Inducing fear/threatening force



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*
about child sexual abuse

Abusive/ Illegal Behaviors



- Sexual explicit proposals/threats (verbal or written notes)
- Repeated or chronic peeping, obscenities, pornographic interests, frottage or rubbing up against another for stimulation
- Compulsive masturbation; task interruption to masturbate
- Masturbation with penetration
- Simulating intercourse with dolls, peers, animal (humping)

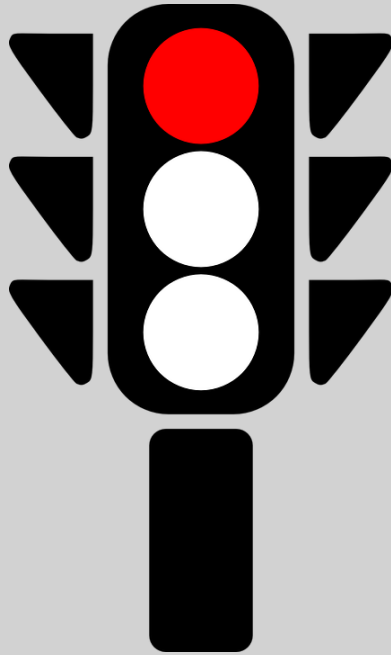


The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*

about child sexual abuse

Abusive/ Illegal Behaviors



- Compulsive masturbation
- Degradation/humiliation
- Grabbing/goosing
- Attempting to expose others
- Sexually aggressive pornography
- Explicit sexual threats
- Sexual conversation/contact with significantly younger children



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part I: *Educate*

about child sexual abuse



Communicate
with children and
teens about
healthy body
boundaries and
respectful
relationships.



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



**HOW WILL YOU
HANDLE IT?**

HE DID WHAT? SHE SAID WHAT?

Establish safety

- Do not ignore what you have witnessed
- Remain calm
- Avoid shaming the child/children



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Model open communication & foster empathy

- Label the behavior
- Label your feelings (upset, uncomfortable, disappointed, embarrassed)
- Point out how behavior affects other bystanders
- Encourage behavior change based on its impact on others

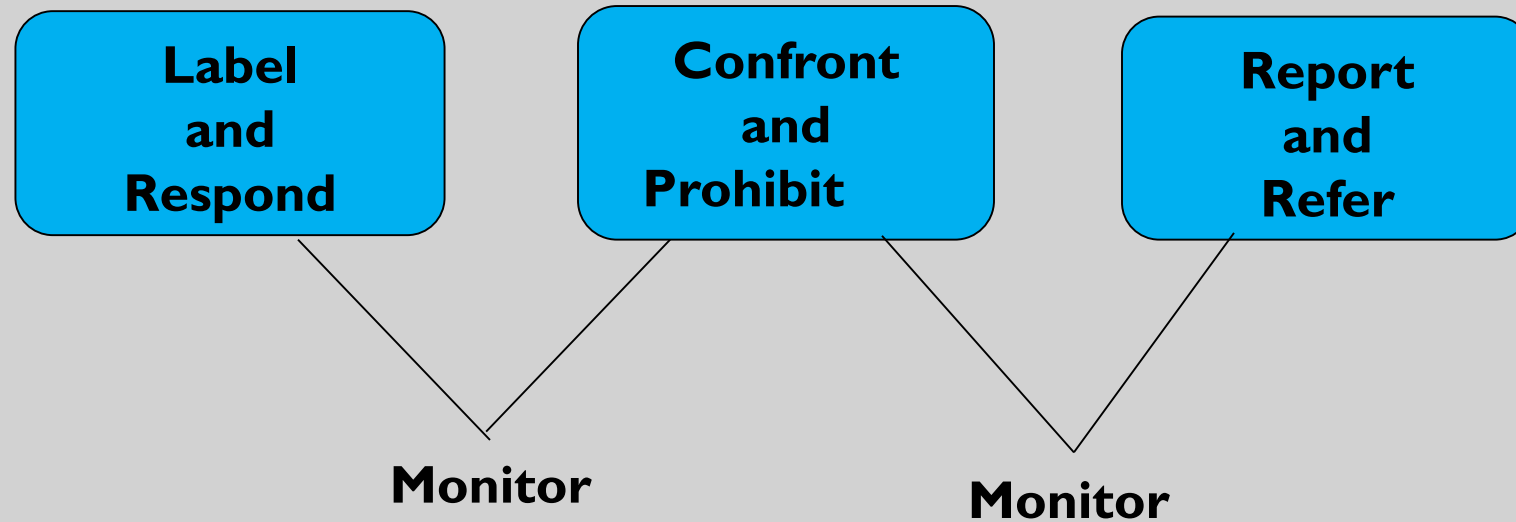


The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Response to Problematic Sexual Behaviors



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



Communicate with:

- Children about healthy body boundaries and respectful relationships;
- Children about their sexual behaviors to promote healthy development; and,
- Adolescents and children when there are concerns about their sexual behavior.



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



Communication messages

Infants (ages 0 - 2)

- Medical terms for all body parts (penis, testicles, vulva, vagina, buttocks)
- Boys and girls are equally special and have some different body parts
- Touching is pleasurable (i.e., cuddling, non-sexual caresses)



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



Communication messages

Early childhood (ages 3 - 5)

- Medical terms for all body parts (penis, testicles, vulva, vagina, buttocks)
- Expectations about privacy and body boundaries
- Basics of reproduction
- It is okay to ask questions about bodies and how they work



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



Communication messages

Middle childhood (ages 6 - 8)

- Expectations regarding rights and responsibilities in relationships
- Recognize that people have different sexual orientations and that everyone deserves respect
- Keep communication about sexuality open, though children will be less likely to ask questions
- Basics of reproduction and human development



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Communication messages

Late childhood (ages 9 - 12)

- Complete information about puberty including both physical and psychological effects
- Encourage questions and open communication while showing respect for privacy
- Encourage critical thinking about media images related to sex and relationships
- Discuss respectful relationships including rights, responsibilities, and boundaries



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse



Communication messages

Adolescence (ages 13 - 17)

- Expectations of family, cultural and/or religious group regarding sex
- Responsibilities and consequences of sexual activity
- Characteristics of healthy versus unhealthy relationships
- Role of alcohol and /drugs in undermining responsible sexual activity



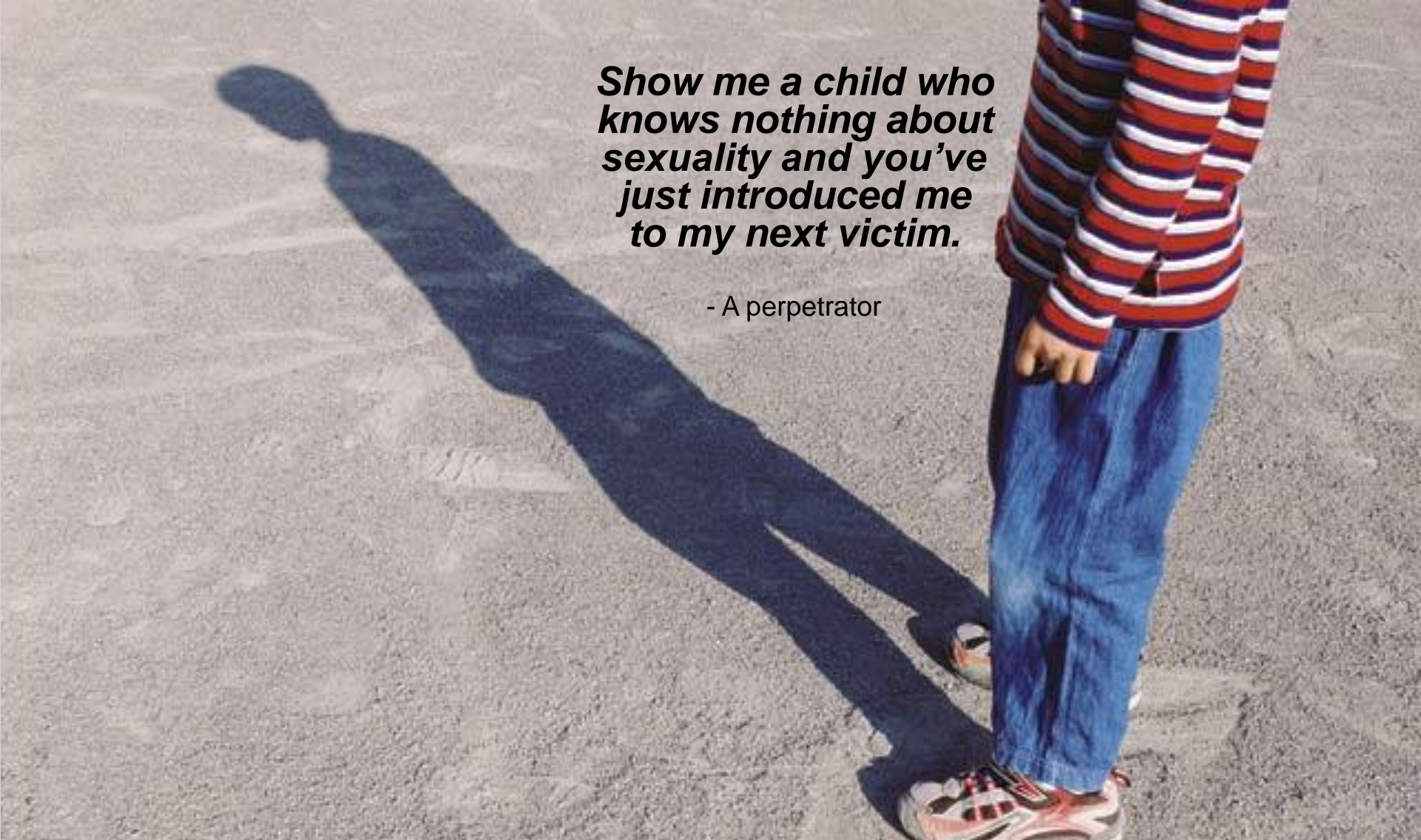
The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

***Show me a child who
knows nothing about
sexuality and you've
just introduced me
to my next victim.***

- A perpetrator



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Prevention Tips for Parents with Young Children

1. Begin talking to your child about personal space and privacy by age 3.
2. Only allow those you trust to provide toileting and bathing care for your child.
3. Encourage children's independence in personal self-care.
4. Introduce the concepts of "OK touch" and "Not OK touch."
5. Discourage co-bathing with siblings and adults once your child begins elementary school. Supervise bathing before this time.
6. Teach children to respect adults' and siblings' privacy.



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Teach your child the body safety rules

1. “All body parts have names and can be talked about respectfully. Names for “private parts” are penis, vagina, breasts, and buttocks.”
2. “Grown-ups and older children have no business touching or “playing” with a child’s private body parts.”
3. “Grown-ups and older children *never* need help from children with *their* private parts.”
4. “It is important not to cross another child’s body boundaries and touch their private parts.”



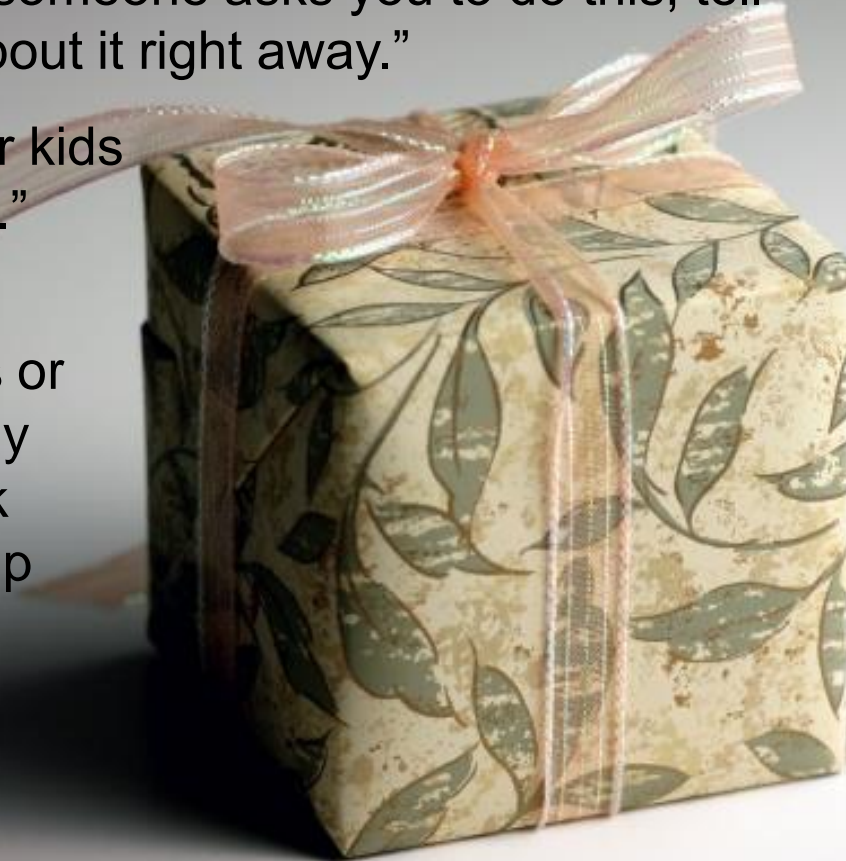
The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Teach your child the body safety rules

5. "If this ever happens or someone asks you to do this, tell me and another adult about it right away."
6. "Surprises can be fun for kids but secrets are not okay."
7. "If you're ever confused about private body parts or anything about your body or touching, you can ask me about it and I will help you."



***It's
easy
if you
start
early
and
talk
often!***



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Prevention Tips for Parents with Teens



- Discuss the expectations of your family, cultural group, religion regarding sex, and responsibilities and consequences of sexual activity.
- Point out healthy relationships that model equality, respect, safety, and discuss how unhealthy ones can be coercive, secretive and isolating.
- Expand the “Don’t drink and drive” talk to include how alcohol/drugs can undermine sexual safety.
- Work out a safety plan to use in case he/she needs to get out of risky situations.



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part II: *Communicate*

to prevent child sexual abuse

Advocate



Advocate

Part III: Advocate

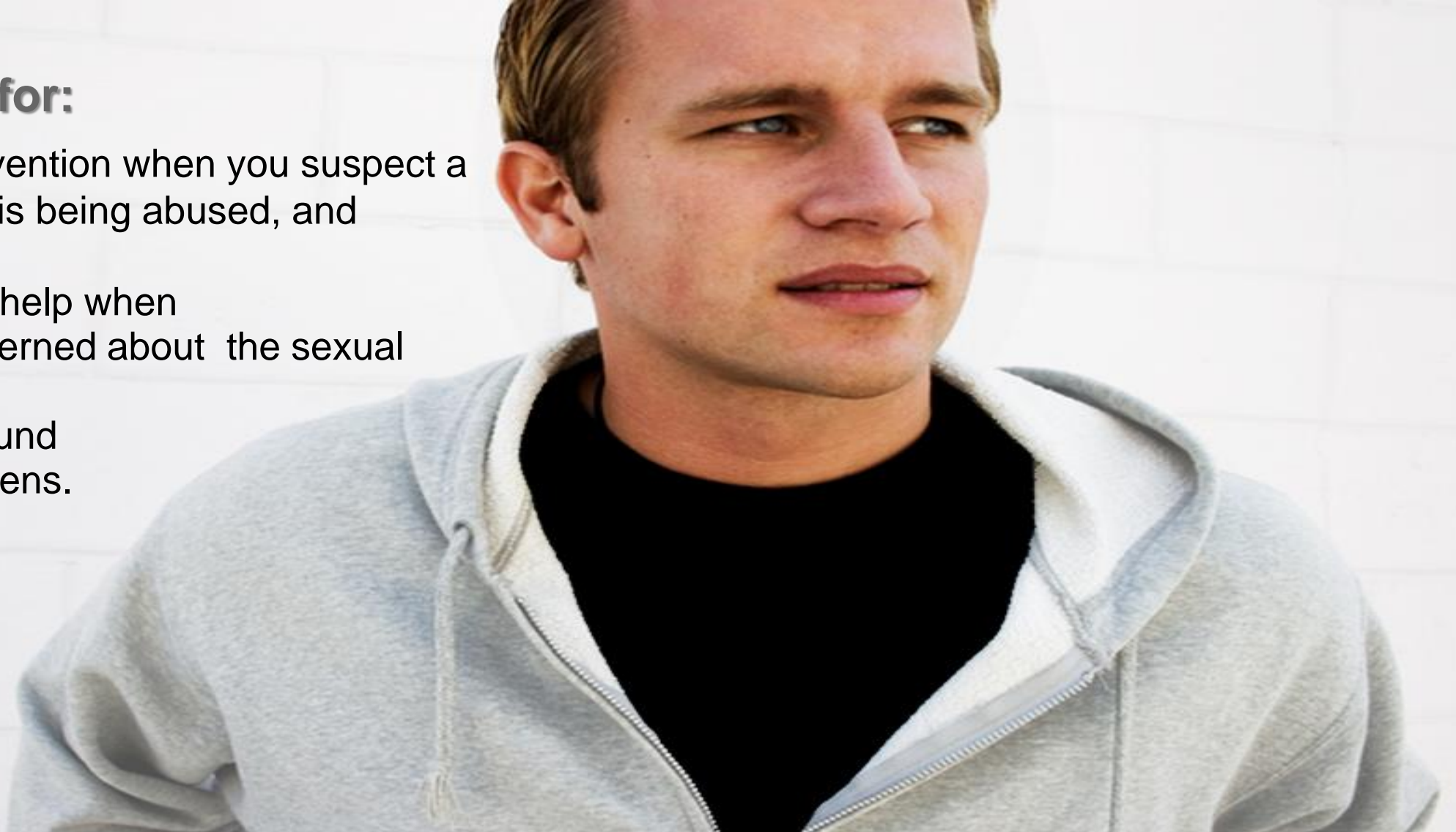
Preventing child sexual abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Advocate for:

- Prompt intervention when you suspect a child or teen is being abused, and
- Professional help when you are concerned about the sexual behaviors of others around children or teens.



Advocate



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part III: *Advocate*

Preventing child sexual abuse

If you suspect abuse



- Report immediately to your local Department of Social Services.
- You must also notify your local police within 48 hours.

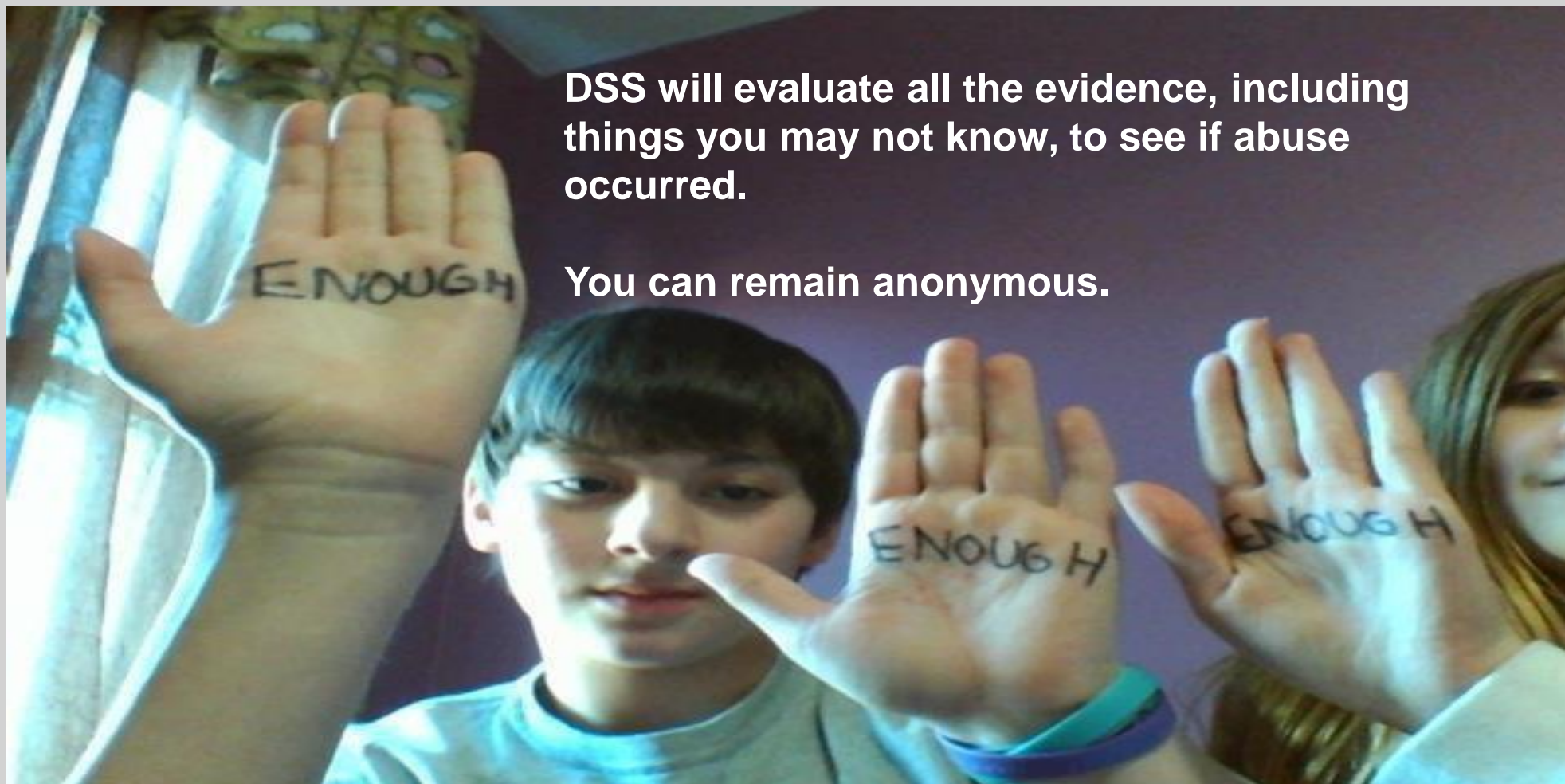
If you suspect abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part III: Advocate
Preventing child sexual abuse

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I REPORT?



DSS will evaluate all the evidence, including things you may not know, to see if abuse occurred.

You can remain anonymous.

If you suspect abuse



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part IV Advocate:
Preventing child sexual abuse

If a child or teen discloses to you:

- ✓ Stay calm.
- ✓ Be supportive.
- ✓ Tell the child or teen:
"I believe you. You are not to blame. You were brave to tell. I will do my best to protect you."



If a child or teen discloses



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part III: Advocate

Preventing child sexual abuse



- ✓ Ask open-ended questions, e.g. *“It’s important that I know what you know. Tell me what happened.”*
- ✓ Don’t ask them to repeat multiple times what they have said.

Call Child Protective Services or police; they may arrange for the child or teen to be interviewed by a skilled professional interviewer.

If a child or teen discloses



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part III: *Advocate*

Preventing child sexual abuse

If a child or teen discloses to you:



- Plan for safety so the child or teen won't be vulnerable to the abuser's actions.
- Notify other adults of the situation as necessary.
- Get support for yourself.

Handling disclosures



The Enough Abuse Campaign

Part III: Advocate

Preventing child sexual abuse

For Additional Enough Abuse Campaign Resources



www.enoughabuse.org

Subscribe to our free
“10 Conversations”
e-mail educational series

Download
“Straight Talk Prevention Guide for Parents”

Download
“Sexual Abuse Safe Child Standards”

© MassKids 2016 All rights reserved. No portion of this training may be duplicated or distributed without written permission from Massachusetts Citizens for Children, Inc.



The Enough Abuse Campaign

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Family Tree

www.familytreemd.org

- Parenting HelpLine

1-800-243-7337

THANK YOU

